

REMARKS

In the July 13, 2005 Office Action, all of the claims stand rejected in view of prior art. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the July 13, 2005 Office Action, Applicant has amended the claims as indicated above. Thus, claims 1-20 are pending, with claims 1, 2 and 16 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

In paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-16 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,024,413 (Dixon) in view of U.S. Patent No. 1,722,855 (Owen) and claims 17-19 stand rejected over Dixon in view of Owen and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,443,533 (Lacombe). In response, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 2 and 16 as mentioned above.

More specifically, independent claims 1, 2 and 16 now clearly recite that an interior surface of a spoke attachment portion is free from contact with a reinforcement member. This arrangement is ***not*** disclosed or suggested by the Dixon and Owen combination or any other prior art of record. It is well settled in U.S. patent law that the mere fact that the prior art can be modified does ***not*** make the modification obvious, unless the prior art ***suggests*** the desirability of the modification.

Dixon discloses an eyelet in a rim that has an internal portion 42 and an external portion 44. The internal portion 42 bears against an interior portion of the rim to keep the eyelet in place. Accordingly, the interior portion of the rim is not free from contact with the eyelet. In contrast, independent claims 1, 2 and 16 require that the interior surface of the spoke attachment portion be free from contact with the reinforcement member.

Owen discloses a wheel with flanged reinforcing ferrules *c*. The reinforcing ferrule *c* has cylindrical projections *k*. The spokes *a* are secured to the reinforcing ferrule *c* by a spigot, which extends into the tubular spoke *a*.

In contrast, independent claims 1, 2 and 16 have reinforcement members without cylindrical projection extending from the exterior facing surface and an inner radial direction. Furthermore, claims 1, 2 and 16 have reinforcement members with inner threads configured to directly couple a threaded end of a spoke.

“If the proposed modification or combination of the prior art would change the principle of operation of the prior art invention being modified, then the teachings of the references are not sufficient to render the claims *prima facie* obvious.” MPEP §2143.02 citing *In re Ratti*, 123 USPQ 349 (CCPA 1959). The modification of Dixon with Owen requires a complete reconstruction of the invention of Dixon. Owen teaches permanently and immovably fixing the spoke *a* to the rim *b*. In contrast, Dixon is directed to a means for easily replacing broken spokes. See, for example, column 7, lines 57-61. Therefore, a complete reconstruction and redesign would be required in order to integrate the teachings of Owen with the device of Dixon.

Applicant respectfully submits that Lacombe does not remedy the deficiencies of Dixon and Owen in that the claimed spoke attachment portion and reinforcement members are not disclosed.

Moreover, Applicant believes that the dependent claims are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claims 1, 2 and 16 and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Also, the dependent claims are further allowable because they include additional limitations. Thus, Applicant believes that since the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest the invention as set forth in independent claims 1, 2

and 16 the prior art of record also fails to disclose or suggest the inventions as set forth in the dependent claims.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn in view of the above comments and amendments.

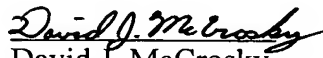
Prior Art Citation

In the Office Action, additional prior art references were made of record. Applicant believes that these references do not render the claimed invention obvious.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1-20 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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